

Union Square Civic Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes 7/9/14

I. Introduction

Anne Tate, co-chair of the CAC, welcomes and opens the discussion for public comment.

II. Public Comment Period

- Union United: representative from the immigrant community stresses the importance of safety, affordability and parks. USQ should remain a multicultural, diverse community.
- The Welcome Project: representative (who is also a member of Union United) states that he hopes there will be continued engagement with community now that a developer has been selected; fears around transparency.

III. Substantive Issues

Now that a developer has been selected, Wig Zamore, co-chair of the CAC, explains there are three issues of concern to address in the near-term:

- a) How Development on 12-acres is nested within the larger development district (Union Square and Boynton Yards – approx. 125 acres in total). Must address goals for the area as a whole, the Union Square central neighborhood and the 12-acre development parcels.
- b) Master Plan Process: Who will undertake the master planning of the entire district? There needs to be a better understanding of the mix of land uses. The plan needs to incorporate infrastructure (above and below ground), parks, open space, water table issues and timeline for when this development is expected to occur.
- c) Legal Agreements: The City originally put out an RFQ and then the Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA) selected a Master Developer. The SRA will be the agency to contract with the developer, but the CAC will want to chime in on any agreement before it is signed. In advance, it is important to understand *who* will be contracted with (e.g. Magellan? Mesirow?), as US2 is currently more of a marketing collaborative than a development firm. The CAC will also want to be involved in the Community Benefits Agreement that the City will sign with the Developer. Additional agreements include environmental impact reports.

IV. Introduction of Master Developer, US2

Zamore introduces Greg Karczewski (pronounced: Kar-Ches-ki), who then thanks the CAC and the community for their involvement thus far. US2 believes the CAC will be a great partner to work with moving forward.

- Karczewski introduces other team members who are present at the meeting, including: Paul Scappicio (Sage), Dave Morrow (Gilbane), Drew Leff (Stantec), David Dixon (Stantec), Jeff Sauser (Stantec) and Deborah Fennick (Fennick McCredie).
- US2 is already working with the City and looking for office space in Union Square. US2 will work cooperatively with the City on the master planning process, which will require a wide-ranging

effort involving many stakeholders. US2 is in the process of putting together a 100-day plan, and will include many stakeholder interviews during this time period.

V. Q&A between CAC and Greg Karczewski

- Describe some of their Chicago presentation, particularly around economic development:
 - US2 has looked at the data around the knowledge and innovation economy and recognizes this is a large opportunity to capture regional economic growth; the tide is shifting from financial services to the creative economy, so US2 is looking to build spaces to accommodate this shift. They have begun conversations with MassChallenge, WorkBar and T3 Advisors to look at options for Union Square.
 - US2 has also looked at the demographic shift—in the next 10+ years, the region will be dominated by Millennials, a generation interested in living and working in proximity to a complete set of amenities and services. US2 will look to build this type of environment around the new Union Square T Station.
- Describe approach to infrastructure needs:
 - Infrastructure will be the bones of the development. US2 is meeting with the MBTA the next morning to begin that conversation. US2 has already met with the City's infrastructure department and Parsons, and looks forward to the collaborative efforts to address infrastructure moving forward.
- What defines "Master Planning"?
 - US2 will plan for the 12-acres on the acquisition and disposition blocks, but will also consider how it fits into a broader vision for Union Square area. It will be up to the community to help decide what that environment looks like.
- Zoning: What would you change, what would you keep?
 - Karczewski did not feel comfortable answering this question just yet, but says that he and the US2 are already meeting with the City's Planning Department to consider how development will fit into the existing (and planned modification) zoning.
- Involvement in MBTA station design:
 - Now that US2 has been designated as the Master Developer, they can begin the process of working with the MBTA. There is a meeting scheduled for tomorrow morning already. US2 has begun formulating some ideas as to what development around the station might include.

VI. Q&A between Public and Greg Karczewski

- Will there be more public and community meetings about the development process?
 - Yes, absolutely.
- Has US2 begun data collection around community impact, or will it?
 - Not yet, but US2 would consider doing so.
- How will US2 address the water table issues in Union Square?
 - US2 is working with Stantec to look at this issue. In Chicago, they have used features like green roofs to mitigate some water issues, but there are many options to consider. US2 will get as creative as possible to address water table issues.
- Would US2 consider engaging in a course at the high school or a local college around development?

- Yes. Karczewski is actually an adjunct professor at Notre Dame, so he would be very interested in supporting this effort. USQ can serve as a great learning lab.
- US2 has community lists already—will they use these lists to spread information about community meetings? Will US2 support the outreach efforts?
 - Yes. US2 can and will help conduct outreach to ensure community participation, especially around the design charettes.
- Has US2 considered the ripple effects of its development? On local rents, businesses, etc?
 - Yes, and US2 plans to be proactive in addressing these concerns.
- Does US2 have ideas yet around how to support existing businesses or residents who may be displaced as a part of development?
 - Yes, US2 has ideas but it is premature to discuss them. This will be a major focus of US2 and will share ideas as planning unfolds. This will require a community-wide effort.

VII. Conversation Regarding CAC Process

Anne Tate provides a bit of an overview of the CAC process and procedures moving forward.

- CAC is in the process of establishing its own website. Gordon Wong taking the lead; Joe Beckmann has offered to support.
- CAC has a legal obligation to post meeting notices and agendas 48-hours in advance. All meetings will be open to the public.
 - Someone from the public suggests that, in order to really be inclusive, meetings are advertised through other vehicles, including local cable and newspapers, for those who do not have internet access. Consider advertising meetings through print mailings, especially targeted at neighbors in USQ, and in multiple languages.
- Monthly CAC meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday of each month, 6pm at the Argenziano School, unless otherwise noted. Other locations will be considered (including perhaps the Argenziano School's library or SCAT building), but meetings will be held in USQ.
- Meetings will be held regardless of whether there is a quorum; a quorum may be required if the CAC is voting on a major issue. What constitutes a quorum is still TBD.

VIII. General Conversation Among CAC, Community

- How will the CAC engage around a community benefits agreement? Will it be proactive? Reactive? Invite US2 into this process? Conduct outreach to see what the public would like to have included? (Anne says "yes" to all).
- Who will lead the "master planning" process? This is a complicated question.
 - Wig Zamore and Philip Parsons both provide comment: US2 was selected as a Master Developer for 12-acres, not for the entire area. This is a problem that must be addressed, as a Master Plan for all of Union Square and the broader area including Boynton Yards is needed.
- How can the CAC be helpful to the CAC moving forward?
 - SRA is not typically involved at the granular level moving forward (as the CAC will be).
 - CAC wants to meet with the SRA, or have them attend CAC meetings.
 - Perhaps have a liaison from SRA and from CAC who speak regularly.
- Concern over public assets / public buildings in Union Square: must be addressed
 - Joe Beckmann says the community does not want a library in Union Square

- There must be a broader conversation about the high school, city hall, library and public safety building moving forward.

IX. Meeting adjourned